Recognition issues in the Bologna Process

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A Council of Europe contribution to the European Higher Education Area, in co-operation with the Ministry of Education in Portugal

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the higher education institutions
- Develop discussion on learning outcomes and competences, in order to help move recognition procedures away from formal issues such as length of study and names of courses, and towards procedures based on the results of student learning
- Continue to develop cooperation between institutions leading to joint degrees and other forms of automatic recognition, as confidence building measures leading to more widespread acceptance of mutual recognition
- Examine what information is provided regarding recognition procedures at the institution, to ensure students and other stakeholders are correctly informed
- Examine how this information is provided, to ensure that it is easily accessible in a transparent and effective way
- Ensure adequate internal structures, to ensure that recognition procedures are carried out in an efficient and transparent manner
- Develop appropriate human resources and staff policies to meet the challenges, especially to ensure that all staff (academic and administrative) are fully aware of European best practice in the field
- Include recognition issues and procedures in your internal quality assurance procedures, to continue to develop these fields for the benefit of the institution, its staff and students.

To academic networks, including student organisations:
- Ensure your members are fully aware of recognition issues and practices, in order to develop a more coherent approach to these issues across Europe
- Monitor recognition issues affecting your members, in order to take action where necessary and to provide feedback to the European higher education community on areas of best practice or concern
- Develop consensus on learning outcomes and competences, in order to promote a European approach in these fields.

To ENIC and NARIC networks

- Examine ways in which a European virtual recognition platform could be developed, making accumulated existing knowledge and experience more visible and accessible, in order to promote existing good practice and to ensure widespread European visibility and awareness
- Develop cooperation and exchange with national and European quality assurance bodies, to ensure that recognition issues are also covered by quality assurance procedures
- Examine the feasibility of supplying standard guidance to prospective students (e.g. in the form of a fact sheet on recognition issues and a list of basic questions which they should take into consideration), to assist students regarding what to look for and which questions to ask when choosing institutions and dealing with recognition issues
- Assist the relevant academic and other partners in developing frameworks for the description of learning outcomes
- Examine the feasibility of creating an international working group to develop a European code of good practice for the provision of recognition information

To governments

- Provide incentives for the reform of institutional management practice in the field of recognition, to encourage higher education institutions to develop effective and efficient institutional procedures when dealing with recognition issues
- Ensure legislation is adequate and forward looking, to ensure that higher education institutions and recognition bodies are in a position to apply best European practice
- Ensure adequate human and financial resources at Ministry, ENIC/NARIC and institutional level to meet the new challenges of recognition
- Ensure an integrated national system for recognition is available via the ENIC/NARIC, to provide a clearly visible one-stop-shop for students and other stakeholders in each country
- Include recognition issues in the remit of appropriate quality assurance bodies.

To the Council of Europe, possibly in partnership with UNESCO, the European Commission and other international governmental and non-governmental organisations

- Monitor the implementation of the Lisbon Convention and how measures are applied in individual countries, including any gaps between implementation and the legal provisions, in order to provide feedback to the Bologna Process, national governments, the European academic community, including students and other stakeholders

- Examine the feasibility of developing a tool for use by citizens to gauge their own competences, as a contribution to the discussion on learning outcomes and competences, and as a way to encourage access to higher education and/or the labour market

To Ministers responsible for Higher Education, who will meet in Berlin in 2003

- In response to concerns expressed by a part of the higher education community, including some students, make clear that new degree structures should continue to ensure that higher education promotes three main qualities in its graduates:
  - Preparation for the labour market
  - Preparation for active citizenship
  - Preparation for continued personal development
- Encourage further work at national and European levels on the issue of learning outcomes
- Encourage the development of a stronger European awareness of recognition issues, by strengthening existing networks and promoting more open access to relevant information
- Invite all European States of the Bologna Process to ratify the Lisbon Convention, as a major element to facilitate the creation of the European Higher Education Area.

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